

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

FEATURE

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### TROUT

No group of fishes in the world has turned on so many English-speaking scribes and painters as have the trout. The literature and paintings about these fishes predate even the printing press, with poets singing their praises, artists painting them, and prose writers penning words by the thousands.

The scribes, including pre-Izaak Walton and post-Ernest Hemingway, have built up a great store of sense (and nonsense) about these fishes. The painters, including still-life devotees and calendar illustrators, reflect enthusiasm, if not skill.

Why trout have inspired such adulation is easy to say. They are handsome, often brightly colored, live best in the cool clean waters of tree-shaded streams where solitude and true recreation used to be possible. Often wary, when finally hooked they battle for their lives with spectacular leaps and runs, lending brief periods of great excitement to the serenity of fishing.

And so many Americans go out in many ways to many waters seeking specimens of several species of trout, and use a variety of techniques in freshwaters across almost two-thirds of the country.

Among those caught--hopefully--are the cutthroat, lake, golden, and Dolly Varden, but the big three for sporting purposes are the rainbow and its seagoing variant the steelhead, the brook, and the brown, the last an import from Europe. The Gila and Apache species and a few cutthroat subspecies are considered endangered, restricted as they are to only a few bodies of water in parts of the arid West.

Trout differ from other groups of fishes in coloration, fin size and shape, shape of mouth, and streamlining. Coloration is protective, as it is with many other fishes, the trout being noted for spots and streaks of reds, blues, greens, and yellows.

Preferring cooler waters than sunfishes, trout are at home in northern or mountainous waters, but some species exist as far south as Georgia in cooler waters of the hill country.

Most trout lend themselves readily to hatchery rearing, but the rainbow is all-round champ in this. The rainbow has been moved about

by fishery biologists and even farmers, so that its original narrow range in the West has been extended to much of the Nation, as well as South America, Italy, Denmark, Australia, etc.

The Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service, many State fishery agencies, and some universities have acquired much information about this group of fishes, on such aspects as nutrition, disease, rearing temperatures, and natural and artificial spawning. The rainbow in particular has been the guinea pig of many studies in many places.

The big three will reproduce naturally in many waters, most ascending smaller streams to spawn. Depending on species, spawning is from early spring to late fall, with nests built by females in gravelly bottoms and containing sometimes as many as 6,000 eggs. Growth of young can be rapid, some growing as much as 4 inches the first year. On the other hand, brook trout in some environments may attain the 4-inch size only after 5 years. With lighting, temperature, and feeding controls, spawning time and growth can be greatly altered in hatcheries.

Natural food for all three species covers a variety of creatures, including mayfly and caddisfly nymphs, stoneflies and their larvae, small mollusks, crustaceans, and other fish. Terrestrial insects may comprise a considerable portion of the diet in summer months. On a feasting that includes other fish, individuals have been known to grow to nearly 40 pounds. World record for all trout was a lake trout weighing 63 pounds 2 ounces taken on hook and line from Lake Superior in 1952.

Some anglers use live baits, with nightcrawlers leading the list, and also including salmon eggs, small pieces of fresh meat, minnows, grubs, grasshoppers, crickets, and the like, but a growing number prefer fly rod and dry or wet flies, floating them through riffles into pools beneath brush piles and around submerged logs and boulders.

Dry and wet flies are made to look like any of a wide variety of insects and other small animal life, and the making of flies has become a ritual for many anglers.

All trout are sensitive to pollution, so many U.S. anglers live with anxiety that their choice waters will be ruined. In fact, some fishermen have quit worrying--their fears have been realized.

cutthroat

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rainbow

